



NEWS RELEASE

**Public Affairs Office
Fort Riley, KS 66442
Telephone (785) 239-3033/3410 FAX (785) 239-2592
After Hours (785) 239-2222
E-mail: stephanie.perrin@riley.army.mil or
skidmord@riley.army.mil
www.riley.army.mil**



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT
Stephanie Perrin, Assistant Media Relations Officer (785) 239-3033

Rel. No. 7-48-2006
July 28, 2006

FOREIGN TROOPS AIDE IN IED TRAINING AT FUNSTON

Sgt. Zachary Shumway
Task Force Dagger PA

Two members of the improvised explosive device task force in Iraq recently visited Fort Riley's military transition team training compound at Camp Funston to help refine IED training for deploying Soldiers.

Both Lt. Cmdr. Steve Bliss, of the Royal Australian navy, and Sgt. Maj. Stephen Thorn, of the British army, are members of Task Force Troy, the coalition's primary organization responsible for responding to the IED threat in Iraq. In order to help coalition Soldiers stay ahead of insurgent tactics, Bliss and Thorn visited the military transition team training facility run by 2nd "Dagger" Brigade, 91st Training Division, to update and assess IED training.

"Training the trainer is the best way to get the word out," Bliss said. He said because the American force in Iraq is so large it is impractical for a few IED experts to train the entire force. Instead he notes, the best way to disseminate counter IED methods is to train Soldiers ranking from specialists to sergeants who will continuously spread counter IED methods.

"Our mission here is to assess and evaluate the IED training that 2nd Brigade is doing to ensure American Soldiers receive top rate training before their insertion in theater," Thorn said.

1-361st Engineer "Redhawk" Battalion is the "Dagger" Brigade's primary element responsible for IED training on Fort Riley. "Redhawk" Command Sgt. Maj. Herbert Maison said, "Task Force Troy conducted a mobile training team visit to review our program and how we train. During this review [we] exchanged ideas and lessons learned to better prepare us to perform our jobs and to enhance our communication skills."

Maison said that both Bliss and Thorn were extensively experienced in dealing with IEDs. "We are using the expertise of the Soldiers who visited us to gain another level of certification, thus, enhancing our ability to conduct training," he said.

Task Force Troy uses United Kingdom soldiers because of their previous experiences with IEDs, Thorn said. "American experience with IEDs is in its infancy, whereas the British army has had decades of experience fighting the Irish."

Thorn has completed two tours in Iraq and is currently deployed on his third one. He says the greatest threat facing Coalition Forces in Iraq is posed by IEDs, and he believes his expertise in locating IEDs before they go off can limit that threat.

Bliss said Coalition Forces continue refining their training and awareness to stay ahead of the new threats posed by updated insurgent tactics. "We are teaching the whole spectrum of IED technology because not all IEDs are the same," Thorn said. "The goal is to make sure the counter-IED operator knows what to do and how to do it when he sees an IED."

The information provided by Task Force Troy will augment "Redhawk" Battalion's ability to train Soldiers deploying to Iraq, Maison said. "The information we received from Task Force Troy was very valuable and will enhance the quality of training we conduct here at Fort Riley."

"I think that 2nd Brigade's training is excellent. This is the type of training that should have been established years ago as a proactive program to counter the IED threat," Bliss said.